UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1998/528
17 June 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 17 JUNE 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 12 May 1998, which I have received today from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 12 May 1998 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the sixteenth monthly report on operations of the Stabilization Force (SFOR) (see appendix). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Sixteenth monthly report to the Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. There are approximately 35,000 troops currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from the 16 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and from 20 non-NATO countries.

2. Over the reporting period (21 March-20 April), SFOR continued to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance by means of ground and air patrols. Approximately 2,400 sorties were flown by combat aircraft, with the SFOR helicopter fleet flying approximately 194 hours. Deployment of SFOR troops in support of exercise Dynamic Response '98 began on 26 March. The exercise, designed to test the capability of SFOR to deploy strategic reserve forces into Bosnia and Herzegovina, continued until 7 April.

3. Over the reporting period, SFOR continued to secure the transmission towers used by Srpska Radio Television at Duga Nijva, Udrigovo and Veliki Zep in Multinational Division (MND) (North) and at Trebevic and Leotar in MND (South-East). On 13 April, the Commander of SFOR and Republika Srpska Prime Minister Dodic signed a Memorandum of Understanding which established procedures for the transfer back to the Republika Srpska authorities of the control and security of the towers. The transfer operation is currently under way.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

4. The parties remain generally compliant with most military provisions of the Peace Agreement across the whole area of operations. However, more Bosnian Serb houses in Drvar in MND (South-West) and Bosniac houses in Stolac, in MND (South-East), were destroyed in arson attacks over the reporting period, and, on 16 April, an elderly Bosnian Serb couple was murdered in Drvar. SFOR presence in Drvar was increased as a result, and the Office of the High Representative and the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) relieved the Deputy Mayor of Drvar, the Cantonal Chief of Police and the Cantonal Minister of the Interior of their duties.

5. As reported in the previous report (see S/1998/310, annex, appendix, para. 15) and as a result of pressure from the SFOR Commander and the High Representative, Bosnian Croat military units have now withdrawn from civilian sites in Drvar and Vares in order to facilitate the return of refugees. Over the reporting period, approximately 60 displaced persons returned to Drvar each week.

6. Over the reporting period, SFOR conducted a total of 315 military weapons storage site inspections: 102 Bosniac; 76 Bosnian Croat; 4 Federation; and 133 Bosnian Serb. Thirty-three anti-tank mines were confiscated from the Bosniacs and 24 hand grenades were taken from the Bosnian Croats. In accordance with SFOR policy, those confiscated weapons will be destroyed, after a period of time to allow for appeals.

7. SFOR monitored a total of 1,383 training and movement activities over the reporting period: 251 Bosniac; 56 Bosnian Croat; 112 Federation; and 964 Bosnian Serb. One training and firing ban was imposed on the Bradina Instruction Centre (Republika Srpska) from 3-23 April. The training and movement ban placed on the Bosnian Serb 701 Brigade in Trebinje was lifted on 10 April.

8. Over the reporting period, SFOR monitored 545 demining operations carried out by the Entity Armed Forces: 200 by the Bosniacs; 178 by the Bosnian Croats; 56 by the Federation; and 111 by the Bosnian Serbs. Both entities continue to demonstrate satisfactory compliance with the counter-mine campaign, and there are currently no bans imposed due to failure in that area.

9. Following the SFOR "Train the trainer" courses (which were reported in January), each of the Entity Armed Forces established and conducted their own courses for demining teams. The last such course ended on 27 March, and SFOR assesses that all courses have been conducted to a high standard.

10. Since the introduction of the current SFOR demining policy on 10 March 1997, a total of 3,481 anti-tank mines, 18,271 anti-personnel mines and 1,177 items of unexploded ordnance have been removed in 3,251 mine-clearing operations.

11. The amnesty programme for mines, ordnance and war-like matériel, which was launched in the first week of March under Operation Harvest, came to an end on 15 April. During the operation, the following weapons and ammunition were received: 2,000 small arms; 1,300 anti-tank rocket launchers; 82 missiles; 14,000 grenades; 6,000 mines; 509,000 pieces of small arms ammunition; 4,500 indirect fire rounds; and 2,860 kilograms of explosives.

12. Over the reporting period, 22 unauthorized checkpoints were dismantled: 8 in the Federation and 14 in the Republika Srpska. The identification cards of the personnel involved were confiscated and the incidents are being investigated by IPTF.

13. The Republika Srpska Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade remains subject to the control of SFOR. A training and movement ban remains imposed on the Brigade owing to its continued non-compliance with the SFOR Commander's instructions.

14. The Police Unit for the Protection of Persons and Buildings was brought under annex I-A of the Peace Agreement in February. On 2 April, SFOR carried out a compliance inspection on the 10 sites under the surveillance of the Unit in Pale. The operation was conducted without incident. Seven of the 10 sites were cleared, and the Unit is now guarding only 3 sites. The 62 policemen who were listed in Pale were reportedly all cooperative and compliant. SFOR has sent a letter to the chief of the local police, Mr. Savic, seeking clarification of the status of the 44 individuals hired from the disbanded detachment of the Unit in Bijeljina.

Cooperation with international organizations

15. Within its capabilities, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations in theatre, working routinely with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Office of the High Representative, IPTF, the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

16. SFOR continues to support the installation phase of the municipal elections through the OSCE Election Results Implementation Committees at national and local levels, and through the provision of a secure environment, area security and support to IPTF. Representatives of SFOR, OSCE and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe met in Sarajevo on 17 April in order to discuss election time-lines for 1998, operations and logistics plans and safety concerns.

17. On 8 April, in Prijedor, SFOR troops detained two individuals indicted for war crimes and ensured their transportation to The Hague. On 16 April, one other indictee surrendered voluntarily, in Banja Luka, and was transported by SFOR to The Hague.

18. SFOR continues to provide assistance to the Office of the High Representative in the field of civil air traffic, primarily through the development of operations at Sarajevo airport and the continuation of work to enable Mostar airport to open to commercial traffic.

19. SFOR continues to support the Office of the High Representative in its efforts to establish joint institutions, primarily through the provision of security, communications and liaison to meetings of the Standing Committee on Military Matters.

Outlook

20. Returns of refugees and displaced persons are likely to continue to increase tensions. SFOR will continue to monitor the situation in Drvar, Stolac and other sensitive areas, and will help to ensure the provision of a secure environment to facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons.